

## BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTICE.

*British New Guinea.* By J. P. THOMSON.  
G. Philip and Son: London, 1892.

THE illustrations and general style of this handsome volume are highly creditable to the publishers; while as regards the matter, we can at least say that we are presented with a useful and readable summary of the state of our knowledge of Papua, fairly up to date. It is of course to be regretted that reports of Sir William Macgregor's explorations of the Bamo—an important affluent of the Fly River—as well as of the country to the eastward, should not have reached Mr. Thomson in time for insertion; but that is not the fault of the compiler: for, to prevent misunderstanding, we may say at once that the book is a mere compilation by one who, we believe, has never visited New Guinea, but, from his abode in Brisbane has sung the achievements of his “fellow-officer,” the Administrator of British New Guinea. Far be it from us to undervalue the work done by Sir William Macgregor; but when we find that the surveys made by his predecessors—distinguished naval officers like Capt. Moresby, Commanders Pullen and Field, and others—are treated without due sense of proportion, while every thing is attributed to “the Administrator,” a certain feeling of antagonism is aroused, and this is increased by the inflated tone adopted by the author. We will quote the heading to the first chapter, for it seems to furnish a keynote to the book:—“It appears to me to be a noble employment to rescue from oblivion those who deserve to be eternally remembered, and, by extending the reputation of others, to advance at the same time our own.—PLINIUS MINOR.” If Sir William is pleased with the manner in which *his* reputation has been extended he must have a strong stomach.

An “Historical Sketch”—far too brief—brings us to the year 1888, when British sovereignty was proclaimed at Port Moresby; after which the Administrator visited the Louisiade Archipelago, the D'Entrecasteaux group, the southern coast of Papua as far as the Dutch limit, and the northern shore up to the German protectorate. These tours of inspection are not badly described, and the account of the attainment of the highest peak in the Owen Stanley Range (12,452 feet) affords some important details respecting the configuration of the mountain mass; but we must add our protest to those of others against the substitution of the name “Mount Victoria” for that bestowed upon the peak many years ago. From a scientific point of view the most valuable portion of the work is the Appendix, which contains some succinct general notes on the Flora of British New Guinea, by Baron von Müller; a full report (occupying 50 pp.) on the Insects, by Mr. Henry Tryon; an interesting chapter on the Reptiles, by Mr. C. W. De Vis; several important vocabularies, &c. To the above-named gentlemen and some other “collaborators” Mr. Thomson expresses his gratitude, and without doubt it is well deserved.